

P-Frank, Alan

ORG/Pizza Supreme

CIA and Castro: Together in McLean

By Allan Frank
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As political art, the mural at Pizza Supreme in McLean isn't exactly Picasso's Guernica, but it is still fairly prescient.

When caricaturist Ed Robins covered the pizza parlor wall at 1313 Old Chain Bridge Rd. in 1970 with Mad Magazine spies, Nixon and Agnew patting a huge CIA building, Fidel Castro waving a flag of friendship from a CIA window and a South Vietnamese adrift in an American rowboat, the picture seemed like silly fun.

NOW, with stories of CIA involvement in assassination plots aimed at Castro prominent in newspapers and on the air waves, and with the withdrawal from Vietnam not long past, only the "verry interresting" cartoon of "Laugh-In" character Arte Johnson seems out of keeping with the times.

For Michael Mansy, the pizza parlor owner, the cartoon at first seemed like a blemish; now, it's a blessing.

When he bought the shop about nine months ago, he thought the mural was a little corny and outdated. "I'm glad I dragged my feet about replacing it," he said. "It's brought a lot of good publicity. It

been in the newspapers and on TV. I don't think it has sold any more pizzas though."

AT SOME OTHER pizza parlor, the publicity binge might have helped, but for Mansy, it is at best a little talked-about asset. Most of his customers already know as much as they want to know about the CIA—they work at the agency's headquarters about one good whiff of an anchovie away.

"The guy (Robins) deserves recognition," said Mansy, "What he put on the wall has all come to life, particularly the little part with Castro. Several years ago, a customer—an elderly man—complained about the part with "(Timothy) Leary for President" because he said it was disrespectful, but other than that, I've never had any complaints."

The artist came in a year ago with a new sketch, but the customers voted it down and we haven't seen him since."

FOR ONE 18-year-old regular customer, Janet Rehnquist, daughter of Supreme Court Justice William Rehnquist, the mural had never made much of an impression until she was asked about it by a reporter.

"I didn't think very much about it because you can't believe what you read in the papers. You can't let the

papers run your life," she said. "You can't say all of a sudden, 'The CIA is crooked.' The papers come out with all these great big headlines of scandal, but I know from my own experience that not all of what they say is true. The papers didn't just distort things about my dad, they lied. That's why I don't believe everything I read about the CIA."

AS JEFF TIERNEY, the man who ladles out the meatball sandwiches, put it, "Some people laugh, some people don't."

Another regular customer, 23-year-old Norman Binsted, said, "I think it's funny. All the important happenings of the last 10 years are all on that wall. It seems like circumstances have drilled holes in all those things we used to believe in—they are all defunct now."

"The CIA used to be like the military, protecting our country. Now they seem more like the Praetorian Guard of Caesar," Binsted added. "I block out most of what I hear about the CIA because I'm so sick of corruption. After Watergate, who can stomach the CIA? I'm a salesman and it affects my positive mental attitude."

"Watch, my CIA business will drop way off during lunch after this story," said Mansy jokingly.